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### RECENSIONES

### SVMARIUM

M. MOGRE, <i>Histoire virante des moines</i> . (B. M. Dalmatia) . . . . .	337
<i>Mallorca ermitana</i> . (J. Massot Muntaner) . . . . .	337
<i>L'ermite au désert</i> . (D. Codina) . . . . .	337
M. J. CAPITÁNS, <i>Lexique de la Regula Magistri</i> . (C. M. Badie) . . . . .	340
J. DEOS, <i>Le Martyrologe d'Usuard</i> . (A. Olivar) . . . . .	342
M. - R. GARCÍA ÁLVAREZ, <i>San Pedro de Mezquita</i> . (J. R. Barreiro Fernández) . . . . .	345

JUANA RAASCH, O. S. B.

## THE MONASTIC CONCEPT OF PURITY OF HEART AND ITS SOURCES

### II. AMONG THE SECOND CENTURY APOLOGISTS AND ANTI-HERETICAL WRITERS AND IN THE LITERATURE OF THE THIRD CENTURY, NOT INCLUDING THE ALEXANDRIANS

*The Apologists and Anti-Heretical Writers and Evil Thoughts*

The stress on purity of heart in the sense of preserving the inner thoughts from sin and keeping the heart's intention directed toward God, which, as I suggested in my first article, was so prominent in the earliest Christian writers, was continued with a slightly different emphasis by the apologists and anti-heretical writers. Urged as a motive for personal watchfulness by the Apostolic Fathers and by others such as St. Cyprian who addressed themselves only to their fellow Christians,<sup>1</sup> the idea of the increased moral obligations of the New Testament which extended even to the hidden thoughts and impulses of the heart was utilized by the apologists as an argument for the moral superiority of Christianity. This trend is first seen in St. Justin Martyr, who remarks, «For not only he who in act commits adultery is rejected by Him but also he who desires to commit adultery: since not only our works, but also our thoughts, are open before God».<sup>2</sup> Athenagoras used the

<sup>1</sup> See *The Monastic Concept of Purity of Heart and its Sources*, first part, in *Studia monastica*, VIII, 1966, pp. 7-33. Cf. also *De lapsis*, 28 (P. L. 4, 488-489), where Cyprian alludes to Christian confessing even having entertained the thought of offering sacrifice during the persecutions.

<sup>2</sup> *Apologia I pro Christianis*, I, 15 (P. G. 6, 349). Translation by A. ROBERTS and J. DONALDSON (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, I, p. 349).

same arguments to refute the charges that Christians practiced cannibalism and other horrible and unnatural crimes. Such actions are possible for those who do not believe in God and a future life, he replies. «But we know that God is present to all our thoughts and words, night and day, that He is light to all things and sees what is in our hearts.»<sup>3</sup> And quoting the same passage cited by Justin, Mt., 5, 28 — the basic text for this doctrine —, he argues, «If a life of virginity and self-deprivation recommends one to God, while to come nigh even to the thought of passion turns one from God, then, if we shrink from the thought, much more will we flee from the deed.»<sup>4</sup>

St. Irenaeus sets forth this teaching in an analogy: just as Christ has increased the content of faith by the Incarnation, so also has he increased our moral responsibility, so that Christians are obliged to abstain even from evil thoughts and words.<sup>5</sup> For, as he says elsewhere, Christ commanded «certain things to be done as being good or excellent and certain things to be abstained from not only in their actual perpetration (*operibus*), but even in the thoughts that lead to their performance (*cogitationibus, quae ad opera ducuntur*).»<sup>6</sup> Yet the Valentinian Gnostics, who commit all sorts of abominations to which they attach no importance, since they believe themselves intrinsically pure and spiritual, think themselves superior to Christians, who abstain from sins even of word or thought.<sup>7</sup> And Tertullian asks, «How does the Lord prove that he *builds an addition upon the Law*, except by prohibiting even sins of the will?» (which a few paragraphs above he calls sins of thought).<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Minucius Felix presents the well-worn argument in his elegant Ciceronian style: «*Vos sceleru admissa punitis, apud nos et cogitare peccare est: vos conscient timetis, nos etiam cons-*

*cientiam solam, sine qua esse non possumus*».<sup>9</sup> The argument was too good to be abandoned and continued to be used by writers of the third and fourth centuries. It will be noted, however, that none of the writers quoted use the term «purity of heart».

### Thoughts and Demons

In two other works whose basic source probably goes back to the early third century but which are largely Jewish-Christian rather than Greek in character like the apologists, namely the Pseudo-Clementines, the cause of inner defilement is said to be evil thoughts. These thoughts, it is believed, are sent by demons, an idea which appears in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*.<sup>10</sup> The Pseudo-Clementines teach that the acceptance of Christianity and baptism will expel the demons who have entered the body at the invitation, as it were, of those who have entertained the thought or purpose of sinning,<sup>11</sup> a notion similar to the concept in the *Epistle of Barnabas* of baptism as an exorcism through the presence of God.<sup>12</sup> Peter will not eat with the unbaptised, even if they are catechumens, because of this diabolical defilement which has not yet been removed.<sup>13</sup> If the demons are not expelled by baptism, «being mixed up with men's souls, they suggest to everyone's mind desires after what things they please, in order that he might neglect his salvation. Whence many, not knowing how they are influenced, consent to the evil thoughts suggested by the demons as if they were the reasoning of their own souls» (*Ἐπιτύπεια τῶν φύγειν αὐτῶν λατρεῖαν*).<sup>14</sup> Here we come extremely close to the language of monasticism.<sup>15</sup> Another monastic theme, custody of the heart, is strongly advocated; man's chief study ought to be «to guard the conscience from every defile-

3. *Legatio pro Christians*, 31 (P. G. 6, 961). Translation by J. H. CREHAN (*Ancient Christian Writers*, 23, p. 72).

4. *Legatio*, 33 (P. G. 6, 965). Tr. CREHAN, p. 74.

5. *Adversus haereses*, 4, 28, 2 (P. G. 7, 1062). Translation by A. ROBERTS and W. H. RAMBAULT (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1, p. 501).

6. *Adversus haereses*, 2, 32, 1 (P. G. 7, 826). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 408.

7. *Adversus haereses*, 1, 6, 4 (P. G. 7, 511).

8. *De penitentia*, 3, 13 (*Corpus christianorum*, I, p. 325). Translation by W. P. LE SANT (*Ancient Christian Writers*, 28, p. 19). Cf. *Apologitum*, 45, 3 (*Corpus christianorum*, I, p. 159). Cf. also ATHENAGORAS, *On the Resurrection from the Dead*,

9. *Octavius*, 35, 6 (P. G. 3, 348).

10. See *Studia monastica*, VIII, 1966, pp. 27-32.

11. *Recognitions of Clement*, 4, 16 (P. G. 1, 1321); *Homilies of Clement*, 9, 19 (P. G. 2, 156).

12. See *Studia monastica*, VIII, 1966, p. 28.

13. *Homilies*, 1, 22 (P. G. 2, 332-333).

14. *Homilies*, 9, 11-12 (P. G. 2, 249). Tr. T. SMITH, P. PETERSON, J. DONALDSON (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 8, p. 277). Cf. also *Recognitions*, 4, 18 (P. G. 1, 1322).

15. For other references to «thoughts of the heart» see also *Homilies*, I, 1 (*Ἐποικα*) (P. G. 2, 58); 9, 19 (*Ἐποικα*) (P. G. 2, 256); 11, 18 (*Ὀρθοῖς*, twice) (P. G. 2, 290).

ment of the heart» (*ab omni impuritatem cordis conscientiam custodire*).<sup>16</sup>

Clement of Alexandria quotes a passage from the Gnostic Valentinus which resembles the Pseudo-Clementines in linking the purity of heart obtained through replacing evil spirits by the presence of God with the beatitude of seeing God:<sup>17</sup>

There is one good by whose presence is the manifestation which is by the son, and by him alone can the heart become pure by the expulsion of every evil spirit from the heart; for the multitude of spirits welling in it do not suffer it to be pure... But when the only good father visits it, it is sanctified and gleams with light. And he who possesses such a heart is so blessed that he shall see God.<sup>18</sup>

#### To See God.

In my first article I pointed out that the writings of the Apostolic Fathers refer to the positive effects of purity of heart in terms of illumination, indwelling, and drawing near to God, using especially the Epistle to the Hebrews rather than the beatitude of Mt. 5, 8 as the textual basis for a genuine Christian mysticism which is at the same time biblical, liturgical, moral, and eschatological. These sources speak more of knowing God than of seeing Him though some of them use the expression «to see with the eyes of the heart» in the sense of an illumination concerning the truths of the Christian faith or in the sense of a vision of Christ—and here we note the influence of apocalyptic—at the right hand of the Father in the heavens, whether this vision is granted at the moment of martyrdom or in the ordinary course of the Christian life.<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy that none of them develop the

contemplative aspects of purity of heart on the basis of Mt. 5, 8. This text was much used by the second-century apologists and polemicists, however, undoubtedly under Middle-Platonist influence, for seeing God «as the end of Plato's philosophy», as Justin remarks.<sup>20</sup> To follow this development in detail would take us too far afield; moreover, it has already been studied.<sup>21</sup> Here we can give only a few indications.

The Christian writers who utilized Mt. 5, 8 were faced with the difficult task of reconciling Christ's promise «They shall see God», with the various biblical statements that man cannot see God and live—which, moreover, corresponded to a tendency of the age to stress the divine transcendence. God's invisibility is a common place of Platonic writings. Tatian<sup>22</sup> and Aristides<sup>23</sup> write about it. Minucius Felix states flatly that God can be known from creation but cannot be seen: «*Hic non videri potest, nec cerniari, sensibus major est*.»<sup>24</sup> Minucius is speaking about seeing God with the bodily eyes and grasping Him with the senses. He does not indicate whether or not he agrees with Albinus and other Middle-Platonists that God can be perceived intellectually by the «sight» of the *nous* alone, since it is a spark of the divinity.<sup>25</sup> Athenagoras takes over this Platonist theory without reservations or qualifications, apparently unaware of any contradiction between it and the tenets of Christianity: God is invisible and can be grasped only by the *nous* and the *logos*.<sup>26</sup> Justin, however, after his conversion to Christianity, dropped the Platonist notion that God can be seen naturally through the *nous* when it is purified of every material influence.

16. *Recognitions*, 6, 10 (P. G. 1, 1353).
17. Cf. *infra*.
18. *Stromata*, 2, 20 (P. G. 8, 1058-1059). Tr. W. WILSON (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 2, p. 372).
19. Cf. Sir., 17-18; Ephes., 1, 18; *Constitutiones apostolorum*, 7, 39, 4, F. X. FUNK, ed., *Didascalia et constitutiones apostolorum*, I (Paderborn, Schoeningh, 1905), p. 443; *I. Clement*, 36, 2 (K. LAKE, ed. and tr., *The Apostolic Fathers*, I, Loeb Library, New York, Putnam, 1930), p. 70; *Mayordom of Polycarp*, 2, 3 (cd. LAKE, II, p. 314). According to G. KRTEL, in Old Testament Jewish piety and in the beginning stages of New Testament revelation «seeing» plays a subordinate role in comparison to «hearing», vision being reserved for eternity, but since the death of Jesus and His resurrection, hearing ranks equally with hearing. (G. KIRTEL, *Die Religionsgeschichte und das Christentum*, p. 100. Summary in A. STOLZ, *The*
20. *Diologie with Trypho*, 2 (P. G. 6, 477). In speaking of Plato Justin is really referring to the teachings of Middle-Platonism. Cf. J. DANIELOU, *Message évangélique et culture hellénistique aux IIe et IIIe siècles* (Paris Desclée, 1961), p. 306.
21. See V. LOSSKY, *The Vision of God* (Clayton, Wisconsin, American Orthodox Press 1963); Marguerite HARL, *Origene et la fonction répétitive du Verbe incarné* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1958), pp. 86-96; J. DANIELOU, *Message évangélique*, pp. 297-333.
22. *Adversus Graecos oratio*, 4 (P. G. 6, 813).
23. *Apoloagy*, 4, 1 (P. G. 96, 1109).
24. *Octovius*, 18 (P. L. 3, 290).
25. Cf. DANIELOU, p. 306.
26. *Supplication for the Christians*, 10 (P. G. 6, 908).

The aged Christian whom he encounters in his search for truth teaches him that the mind can see God only when it has been clothed over with the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup>

One of the first Christian writers to write at any length of the vision of God by the pure soul was St. Theophilus of Antioch,<sup>22</sup> a convert and a Hellenist. He speaks of the soul's natural power to see God in language that does not differ greatly from that of the Platonists. However, his vocabulary is also Jewish-Christian. Like some of the Apostolic Fathers, he uses the expression «the eyes of the heart». Those who have «eyes of the heart» to see with will see God. The only obstacle is impurity caused by sin: «As a burnished mirror, so ought a man to have his soul pure. When there is rust on the mirror, it is not possible for a man's face to be seen in the mirror; so also when there is sin in a man, such a man cannot see God».<sup>23</sup> But since, as Father Daniéou remarks, Theophilus adds that this will not take place until after the resurrection when man has obtained incorruption, a transformation has already been wrought in the Platonist theme of seeing God in the burnished mirror of the pure soul.<sup>24</sup>

Irenaeus assigns a much greater place to the vision of God, even in this present life. Man cannot see God by his natural powers, but only through a freely-granted revelation made through the Son: «The prophets, then, indicated beforehand that God should be seen by men (Is., 40, 5); as the Lord also says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". But in respect to His greatness, and His wonderful glory, "No man shall see God and live" (Exod., 33, 20), for the Father is incomprehensible; but in regard to His love and kindness and as to His infinite power, even this He grants to those who love Him, that is to see God, which thing the prophets did also predict: "For those things that are impossible with men, are possible with God" (Lk., 18, 27). For man does not see God by his own powers; but when He pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and when He wills, and as He wills».<sup>25</sup> Though the Father will be seen fully only in eternal life, man's life even now is to see God and to be transformed into Him:

27. *Dialogue with Trypho*, 4 (P. G. 6, 487). This is also the teaching of St. Basil. Cf. LOSSKY, p. 67.  
 28. *Ad Autolycum*, 1, 2 (P. G. 6, 1027).  
 29. Daniéou, p. 307.  
 30. *Adversus haereses*, 4, 20, 5 (P. G. 7, 1035). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 489.

It is not possible to live apart from life, and the means of life is found in fellowship with God; but fellowship with God is to know God, and to enjoy His goodness. Men therefore shall see God, that they may live, being made immortal by that sight and attaining even unto God.<sup>31</sup>

As Daniéou remarks, «for Irenaeus, to see God is the equivalent of divinization. Knowledge and life are entirely united».<sup>32</sup>

Nowhere do the apologists and polemicists make any connection between «seeing God» as the reward of purity of heart and keeping the heart free from evil thoughts, though both elements are present in their writings. In the Pseudo-Clementines, however, the connection is explicitly established, in a very significant passage:

In like manner he [Jesus] said also that the pure of heart are blessed, and that thereby they should see God, in order that everyone desiring so great a good might keep himself from evil and polluted thoughts.<sup>33</sup>

But in Exodus, 33, 20, we are told that no man can see God and live; how can this be reconciled with Jesus' promise? Peter overcomes this difficulty with a blend of Platonic and biblical arguments: «God is seen by the mind, not by the body; by the spirit, not by the flesh». He is seen now by the angels; like Theophilus, Peter says that He will be seen by men only after the resurrection «when they have been made like angels... For He [Jesus] showed that a time shall come in which of men shall be made angels, who in the spirit of their mind will see God».<sup>34</sup> Elsewhere the *Recognitions* interpret Hebrews 10, 22, so often quoted by the writers of the sub-apostolic age, in terms of the beatitude: «...hastening to attain, with a clean heart and a pure conscience, the world to come, when he shall be able even to see God, the King of all».<sup>35</sup>

31. *Adversus haereses*, 4, 20, 5-6 (P. G. 7, 1035). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 489.

32. DANIÉOU, p. 329; cf. IRENAEUS, *Proof of the Apostolic preaching* (J. P. SMITH, tr., *Ancient Christian Writers*, 16), 6, p. 47; 8, pp. 51-52; 93, p. 104.

33. *Recognitions*, 2, 28 (P. G. 1, 1222). Tr. T. SMITH (*Anc-Nicene Fathers*, 8, p. 105).

34. Note the concept of the *angelic life* as the Christian basis for contemplation. *Recognitions*, 3, 30 (P. G. 1, 1296). Compare *Homilies*, 17, 16 (P. G. 2, 399). Mt., 5, 8 is also cited in *Recognitions*, 2, 22 (P. G. 1, 1260), where the vision of God is said to be the end of all human life and obtainable by good works; 3, 27 (P. G. 1, 1295); *Homilies*, 17, 7 (P. G. 2, 390).

35. 5, 7 (P. G. 1, 1334). Tr. SMITH, p. 144.

The synthesis that has been achieved between the ascetical and mystical aspects of purity of heart and the number of traditional elements found alongside of Hellenistic ideas in this Jewish-Christian spirituality are striking. The Pseudo-Clementines give the fullest treatment of the concept until Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

#### «Pure in Body and in Heart»

The liturgical prayers and hymns of the early Church orders are full of references to purity of heart and reveal a continuing awareness of the effects and exigencies of Christian baptism. These prayers are similar to the recommendations of purity of heart directed to various classes of the Christian community in the pastoral letters of the Apostolic Fathers. The prayer for the consecration of a bishop in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus asks «that he may please thee in meekness and a pure heart»<sup>36</sup> and the formula for the ordination of a priest contains the words, «that he may be able to govern thy people with a pure heart».<sup>37</sup> In the Didascalia bishops are admonished to minister to widows with a pure heart (cor), that is, not to neglect them through human respect or an inordinate concern for money.<sup>38</sup> In book II, 43, 4, the phrase «a pure mind» is used synonymously: «*si mens vestra non est pura aut propter acceptationem personae aut propter dona divitiarum...*». In the context of these texts, «a pure heart» means a mind not swayed by self-interest or extraneous considerations in governing the Church.

A remarkable example of concern for purity is to be found in the collection of liturgical prayers called the *Euchologion* of Bishop Serapion of Thmuis, a former monk, in one paragraph of which the word «pure», *katharos*, appears no fewer than seven times:

36. *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, 4 (ed. B. BOTTI, *Sources chrétiennes*, 11, p. 78). This prayer is also found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, 8, 5, 7 (ed. FUNK, I, p. 476).

37. *Apostolic Trad.*, 8 (*Sources chrétiennes*, p. 38). This prayer is also in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, 8, 16, 4 (ed. FUNK, I, p. 522). The Church orders also teach the obligation to avoid sins of thought. Cf. *Apostolic Constitutions*, 1, 4 (ed. FUNK, I, p. 5); *Didascalia*, 3, 5-6 (ed. FUNK, I, p. 10).

38. 4, 5, 3 (ed. FUNK, I, p. 224). In treating of the beatitudes the *Didascalia* interpret Mt. 5, 8 very generally: «*Si autem et sine [omni] malitia et iniuritate et malignitate, quoniam dicit iterum: Beati mundo corde...*».

O Lord, God through all ages, God of all reasoning minds, God of the pure soul (*ψυχὴν καθαρὸν*) and of those whose prayer is sincere and pure, visible and known in heaven to the pure spirits, living and worshipped on earth in the Catholic Church, praised by the holy angels and the pure of soul, your truth praised, and glorified by the heavens themselves, which you made a living choir for the purpose: grant that this your Church may be living and pure, give it heavenly powers and pure angels to help it, that the praise it offers you may be pure.<sup>39</sup>

A. Hamman comments that «The prominence given to the idea of purity [...] obviously reflects a preoccupation in the mind of the authors».<sup>40</sup> Serapion is clearly stressing that it is purity which enables the angels to see and adore God in heaven and permits men to draw near to worship Him on earth. This is the idea of purity as enabling one to approach God in the liturgy, the original Old Testament significance of the concept. The same idea is found together with another biblical theme, i. e., that it is the Holy Spirit who cleanses and renews the heart, in a petition based on Hebrews, 10, 22 in the *Syriac Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles*, which is believed to go back to the fourth century: «Bestow upon us, Lord, the gift of your Holy Spirit and enable us to approach your holy of holies with clean hearts and good consciences».<sup>41</sup>

Often the prayer is not simply for a pure heart, but for a pure body as well: the phrase «pure in body (or flesh) and in heart (or soul, spirit)» is found so frequently that it becomes a sort of cliché. A few examples will suffice to show the use of the phrase in liturgical prayer. In the *Apostolic Constitutions* the newly initiated pray, «Grant me a clean body, a pure heart (*σωμα ἀτέλον, καρδιαν καθαρὸν*), ...the coming of your Holy Spirit...».<sup>42</sup> The bishop's prayer for the people in the *Apostolic Constitutions* asks, «*Sanctifying our bodies and souls*» (I Cor., 7, 34), grant that 'we may be made pure from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit» (II Cor., 7, 1), two texts that are cited over and over again in

39. 10 (24) (ed. FUNK, II, p. 168). I am including some later Church orders here, both for the sake of unity and because, though codified only in the fourth century, some of their prayers reflect an earlier tradition. Translation by A. HAMMAN and W. MITCHELL, *Early Christian Prayers* (Regency, Chicago, 1961), p. 121, with a few modifications.

40. *Early Christian Prayers*, p. 121, note 1. The word *katharos* is extremely common throughout.

41. A. RAEF, ed. *Anaphora Syriaca* (Rome, 1939), *Anaphora of the Holy Apostles*, 1, p. 212.

42. 7, 45, 3 (ed. FUNK, I, p. 542).

books seven and eight of the *Apostolic Constitutions*.<sup>43</sup> In the *Euchologion* of Serapion we also find, «Sanctify the deacons too. May they be *pure in heart and in body* (*καθαροὶ καὶ σωματικοὶ*) and with a *clean conscience* do you their service...».<sup>44</sup> The blessing for the leity asks, «May their bodies (*καρπατοὶ*) be blessed with chastity and purity (*εἰς ἀσθενοῦντα καὶ καθαροῦντα*) and their souls (*ψυχαὶ*) with teaching and gnosis and mystery».<sup>45</sup>

It is worthy of note that these texts, like the other non-liturgical texts which I shall adduce shortly, do not use a single pair of terms but rather various combinations body and heart, flesh and spirit, etc. It does not seem that the use of the word *pneuma* in these expressions concerning two-fold purity developed as a substitute for *kardia*, for the benefit of Greek-speaking Christians to whom the phrase «purity of heart» might sound strange, but rather that it is often based on Pauline texts having to do with chastity, such as I Cor., 7, 34, which is addressed to virgins, and II Cor., 7, 1, which concludes a warning against marriage with unbelievers. Yet the *pneuma-sark* contrast as used by St. Paul and after him by St. Ignatius<sup>46</sup> and the heart-hands (or lips, flesh, etc.) contrast found in the Old Testament and in the non Pauline parts of the New Testament were analogous in that both stood for «inner versus outer». Of course these pairs or double aspects of a single entity were often assimilated to the Platonic *ousia-soma* dualism or to its Stoic equivalent of the *hegemonikon* contrasted with the irrational parts.

In this parallel between purity of heart or of the intellectual and spiritual element, and purity of the body, a contrast which, for various reasons, was coming to the fore during this period, one of the first questions that comes to mind is, what is the meaning of bodily purity? There is no single answer, as the meaning varies

43. 8, 13, 10 (ed. FUNK, I, p. 516). I Cor., 7, 34 (*τέλοντα καὶ τοῦ σωματικοῦ καὶ τοῦ νοετοῦ*) is also found in another prayer for the people (8, 11, 4, ed. FUNK, I, p. 492). II Cor., 7, 1 (*καθαροῦντας καὶ μόνος καθαροῦντας καὶ τελετοῦντας*) is cited five times; Christ came *καὶ* purge away all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit (7, 39, 4, ed. FUNK, I, p. 442); this purging is among the petitions made for the catechumens (8, 6, 6, ed. FUNK, I, p. 478) for the penitents (8, 9, 3, ed. FUNK, I, p. 485); and for deacons (8, 20, 2, ed. FUNK, I, p. 254).

44. 11 (23) (ed. FUNK, II, p. 168). Tr., HAMMAN and MITCHELL, p. 122.

45. 6 (29) (ed. FUNK, II, p. 164). See also 13 (1), 19 (ed. FUNK, II, p. 176-178), and 6 (19) 1, where similar gifts of body and soul are prayed for.

46. *Epistle to the Magnesians*, 1, 2 (ed. LAKE, I, p. 196), 13, 1 (ed. LAKE, I, p. 208); *Epistle to the Thessalonians*, *Inscription* (ed. LAKE, I, p. 224); *Epistle to the Smyrneans*, 1, 1 (ed. LAKE, I, p. 232); *Epistle to Polycarp*, 5, 1 (ed. LAKE, I, p. 272).

in varying contexts. It can hardly be ordinary physical cleanliness, as this would seem to be ruled out as a fit object for liturgical prayer. In the Church orders no definition or explanation is offered of what is being prayed for. Of course one immediately thinks of chastity, and this is indeed an important element in the notion of bodily purity, as will be seen shortly in considering the literature on virginity. In addition, a very general meaning which will also be considered later is the healing of the body's tendency to the death and corruption which is a consequence of sin. Freedom from evil spirits may also be included in this notion, as in book six of the *Didascalia* (21) and of the *Apostolic Constitutions* (27) we are told that every man is inhabited either by the Holy Spirit, which he receives at baptism, or by evil spirits, which dwell in those whom sin—but not violation of ritual laws, which can only defile the conscience of the weak—has made unclean. Another possible meaning may be health, since the Church orders contain many prayers and instructions for healing the sick, such as the prayer in the *Euchologion* of Serapion that the oil of the sick may be for the «integrity of soul and body and spirit» (I Thess., 5, 23),<sup>47</sup> that is, that they may be wholly sound and sanctified. Physical deformities and handicaps however, are not considered as forms of bodily defilement that would be an impediment as such to the office of bishop; this idea is explicitly rejected in canons 77 and 78 of the corpus listed in Book 7 44, of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. But though in general the *Didascalia*, *Apostolic Constitutions*, and *Euchologion* do not in any way understand «purity in body» to mean Levitical cleanliness, in some early texts concerned with baptism (including, as will be seen, one from the *Apostolic Constitutions*) the phrase seems, when compared to purity of heart, to have some sort of reference to ritual purity, if not in the exact sense in which it was conceived in the Old Testament and in Judaism, as an extension or development of that sense. This is true at least, in several passages which compare Jewish and Christian «baptism», the clearest of which is found in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*:

For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and the body alone... For Isaiah did not send you to a bath, there to wash

away murder and other sins, which not even all the water of the sea were sufficient to purge...<sup>48</sup>

Justin is saying that Christian baptism, empowered with the Redemption and with the Holy Spirit, is able to purify from sins, while Jewish washings can only cleanse the body. He is using an argument that would be readily acceptable to Trypho up to a point, as he is appealing to the common teaching of the entire Jewish tradition, including, with some qualifications, the Qumran community, that the ritual washings could not remove sin, but could only take away ritual impurity, or, in the case of Qumran, an extension of that idea, a quasi-physical stain left by sin.<sup>49</sup> According to Josephus, John the Baptist had a somewhat similar idea of the effects of his baptism (and this may have simply been an erroneous attribution to him on the part of Josephus of doctrines actually held by the Essenes). It could not pardon sins, but could purify the body after the soul had been purified by righteousness.<sup>50</sup> Apparently wishing to present Christian baptism as the fulfillment of the prophets' promises of a purifying outpouring of the Holy Spirit and of the similar expectations of groups such as the Qumran community, and no doubt thinking above all of John's prophecy, «I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me... will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire»<sup>51</sup> Justin asks Trypho at one point, «What need have I of that other baptism, who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost?»<sup>52</sup>

These passages are analogous to three New Testament texts, 1) Hebrews, 9, 10, where «behind 'all sorts of ceremonial washings' (ευθρόποις βαπτισμοῖς) there are 'regulations that concern the physical body,'» «baptism» (and the term itself seems to imply a comparison with Christian baptism) which «cannot perfect the worshipper *in conscience* or in heart, but are concerned solely with the body;»<sup>53</sup> 2) Hebrews, 9, 13-14, where η τοῖς σπέρμασι, καθαρόν, the purity of the body, is even more clearly opposed to χαλεποῖς τοῖς σωματίσις; and 3) I Peter, 3, 21. «Baptism now saves you also (not

the putting off of the filth of the flesh, but the inquiry of a good conscience after God).»

A passage of the *Apostolic Constitutions* contains the same idea, stressing the necessity of the invocation of the Holy Spirit on the candidates before baptism: «For if such an invocation is not performed upon each of them by the dutiful presbyter, the candidate goes merely down into the water as the Jews»<sup>54</sup> J. Ysebaert comments on this passage, «A baptismal ablution without the prescribed prayers would be no more than a Jewish ritual ablution which cleanses only the body»<sup>55</sup>

It is clear, then, that the effect attributed to the Jewish ritual ablutions, including proselyte baptism, in these texts, is bodily purity, in contrast to the purity of the heart brought about by Christian baptism in the Holy Spirit. In writing of the biblical origins of the concept I have tried to indicate that purity of heart in the Bible is a metaphor which implies a comparison with ritual purity. Because the latter was lost through bodily actions involving touching and restored through washing the body, it came to be thought of as «purity of the body», especially by Christians contrasting it with their own baptism, but also by Jews seeking a more interior type of purification, as the quotation from Josephus shows. «Purity of heart, soul, spirit, or conscience», when used in contrast to «purity of the body» or flesh in a baptismal context would mean, then, sinlessness in the inner dispositions and impulses because of Christ's gifts of forgiveness of sins and renewal in the Holy Spirit.

In what sense, we might ask, does Jewish «baptism» — and perhaps in the text cited from the *Apostolic Constitutions* the element of washing in water in Christian baptism as well, if separated from the Holy Spirit — cleanse the body? Do these texts imply

53. W. F. Arner and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952), *oakē*, 2, p. 751.

54. 7, 44, 3 (cf. FUNK, J. P. 450). Translation by J. YSEBAERT, *Greek Baptismal Terminology; its Origins and Early Development* (Nijmegen, Dekker and Van de Vegt, 1962), p. 387.

55. *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, p. 387; cf. M. SIMON, *Vetus Israel* (Paris, Editions E. Boccard, 1964), p. 334, note 1.

56. Hebr., 10, 22 may perhaps be interpreted in this way: «Let us draw near to God... having our *hearts* cleansed from an evil conscience by *spinkting*, and the body washed with clean water.» Though «spinkting» here does not unquestionably denote the action of the Spirit, it undoubtedly refers to a spiritual cleansing

48. 14, 1 (P. G. 6, 504). tr. A. C. COXE, *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, 1, p. 201; 13, 1 (P. G. 6, 509-501). tr. COXE, p. 200.

49. See J. DELORME, *The Practice of Baptism in Judaism at the Beginning of the Christian Era, in Baptism in the New Testament* (Baltimore, Helicon, 1964), pp. 43-45. Cf. *Studia monastica*, VIII, 1966, p. 20. Cf. also J. DELORME, pp. 27-28, 32, 52.

50. Mt., 3, 11; cf. Lk. 3, 3; 16. 52. *Dialogue with Trypho*, 29 (P. G. 6, 537). tr. COXE, p. 208.

that there is any sort of reality to ritual purification? "Though Christ rejected the notion of ritual purity" and St. Paul gave it only a shadowy subjective reality effecting the «weak conscience» of one who believed in it,<sup>57</sup> the early Church was not able to throw off the notion at once, especially in Judaeo-Christian sectors. St. Paul himself saw the need for flexibility and compromise in this matter, and it is recorded that the Council of Jerusalem effected an official settlement which allowed Jewish Christians to continue their practices. Thus the *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* contains provisions for a ritual bath for baptismal candidates on the Thursday before the Sunday on which they were to be baptised,<sup>58</sup> and though it declares that after baptism there is no need for other religious ablutions, vestiges of the idea and practice of ritual purification are apparent in connection with sexual intercourse.<sup>59</sup>

Of course the heretical Judaeo-Christian sect of the Ebionites also gave great stress to «bodily purity» in the sense of ritual cleanliness merging into mere physical cleanness and decency, as

from sin. Many New Testament texts say that Christian baptism is composed of two elements, «the water and the Spirit» (1 Cor., 10, 1; Tit., 3, 5; John, 3, 5), while a series of non-biblical passages repeat the theme that «the water cleanses the body and the Spirit cleanses the heart» seeming to suggest that Christian baptism is a composite, made up of elements of the Old Law —including the baptism of John—the rite of washing in water, which cleanses the body—and of the New—the cleansing of the heart by the Holy Spirit (cf. *Excerpts of Theodosius*, 7 and 8). Most often, however, especially among the later writers, the meaning is that the visible and material cleansing of the body, as well as procuring incorruptionability, is a sign of the invisible cleansing of the heart or soul by the Holy Spirit, which is sometimes thought to be added to the water by an epiclesis. Note, for example, this clear statement by S. Cyril of Jerusalem: «Water flows over the outside and the Spirit washes the inside clean of defects» (*Catechesis*, 1, 14, P. G., 33, 1889). And in the *Apostolic Constitutions* it is said that priests wash their hands during the Eucharist as a sign (*τοποθέτησις καθαρότητος*) (8, 11, 12, ed. FUNK, P. 494). Cf. also Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 3, 4, P. G., 33, 249, in which the connection between the water of baptism and grace Cyril refers to man's constitution from flesh and spirit, which requires a cleansing of the body and of the spirit. See also St. STEPHEN I., Pope, *Fragment from an Epistle to Cyriac* (P. L., 3, 195); PHAREM Hymn, 9, 5 (T. J. LAMY, ed., *Hymni et sermones*, I, p. 92). For Origen's ideas along this line, see B. NRUNTHNER, *Baptism and Confirmation* (New York, Herder and Herder, 1964), pp. 76-77.

57. Mt., 15, 10 and 20; Mk., 7, 15 and 18.

58. The *Didascalia* admit that a belief in ritual purity can make those who are weak «unclean in their consciences» (6, 21, 7, ed. FUNK, I, p. 372); cf. St. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Catechesis Prima*, 2 and 3 (P. G., 49, 225-226), where this notion is expounded at length with great skill.

59. 20 (*Sources chrétiennes*, p. 48).

60. 35 (*Sources chrétiennes*, pp. 71-72). Cf. M. BLACK, *The Scrolls and Christian*

well as to purity of heart, as can be seen in many passages of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*. Besides Christian baptism, Daniélou finds in these works a description of two kinds of purificatory baths. «One is the bath required after sexual intercourse... This bath is obligatory, belonging to the traditional Jewish elements upheld by the Council of Jerusalem and it was a feature of the life of every Jewish Christian. The other, which consisted of daily ablutions, characterised the devout man, the ascetic», and was similar to the lustrations of the Essenes and other groups within the baptist movement.<sup>60</sup> In the eleventh homily, which is in the form of a catechesis dealing precisely the subject of purity of heart and purity of the body and was introduced with the statement that Peter «gave a discourse touching the nature of purity» (καθετεύει),<sup>61</sup> we find a defense of ritual purity and of these daily ablutions in which Peter teaches,

Wherefore as man, having something more than the irrational animals, namely, rationality, purify your hearts from evil by heavenly reasoning and wash your bodies in the bath (καθαρίσασθε).<sup>62</sup>

There follows a very interesting exegesis of Mt., 23, 25-26, the passage about cleansing the inside of the cup (the heart) before the outside (the body). Since Jesus does not prohibit the cleansing of the body but tells the Pharisees, «Clean first the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside too may be clean», the Pseudo-Clementines say that Christ's command does not abolish the idea of bodily purity but only gives priority to purity of heart, whence outward purity follows:<sup>63</sup> «For purification according to the truth is not that the purity of the body precedes purification of the heart, but that purity follow goodness... For when the mind is enlightened by knowledge (γνώσης),<sup>64</sup> the disciple is able to be good and

*Origins* (New York, Scribner's, 1961). Later, however, the practice of Jewish ritual purifications by Christians was severely condemned by the *Didascalia*, Aphraates, St. John Chrysostom and others. Cf. SIMON, p. 378 ff.

61. J. DANIELOU, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (Chicago, Regnery, 1964), p. 372.

62. *Homilies*, 11, 1 (P. G., 2, 276). Tr. SMITH et al., p. 84.

63. *Homilies*, 11, 28 (P. G., 2, 296). Tr. SMITH et al., p. 290.

64. This interpretation does not take into count Christ's pronouncements rejecting ritual purity. See note 57.

65. At first sight this seems a clear evidence of Gnostic influence, as does the phrase, «purify your hearts from evil by heavenly reasoning» quoted above. It is known that there was a great deal of syncretism with Gnosticism in the later stages

therupon purity follows; for from the understanding within, a good care of the body without is produced. As with negligence with respect to the body, care of the understanding cannot be produced, so the pure man can purify both that which is without and that which is within.<sup>65</sup>

Here we note a very interesting theme, which may be stated as, «Cleanse the inside and the outside will also become clean». It is interesting to compare the Ebionite exegesis of M., 23, 25, with the similar explanation of the parallel passage in Luke (11, 39-41) given by St. Cyriac:

It is not the hands that must be washed, but our hearts; and... we must be at pains to remove inward rather than outward stains: for he who has purified himself inwardly has also begun to purify himself exteriorly; for when the soul is made clean, the skin and body begin likewise to be made clean.<sup>66</sup>

St. Justin Martyr teaches the same in his *Dialogue with Tryphaen*:

For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and bodily alone? (i. e., Jewish ritual washings). Baptize the soul from wrath and from covetousness, from envy and from hatred; and lo! the body is pure.<sup>67</sup>

As we have seen, the idea that outer purification follows inner purity can also be found in the Qumran writings and in the description of John's baptism given by Josephus. Concerning the latter's statement that the baptism of John «served not to pardon sins but to purify the body, once the soul had been purified by righteousness»,<sup>68</sup> J. Delorme comments, «for a long time, this statement has been looked on as an effort to forestall any objections on the part of cultivated pagans to an excessively easy method of obtaining forgiveness, and to present John's rite in neo-pythagorean terms: purification must first be accomplished within, and then that of the body will follow, brought about by a bath.» But

now that we can recognize in Josephus' explanation the ideas of the Community of Qumran on religious baths, it is no longer possible to dismiss it so easily.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, there are many indications that the theme «Cleanse the heart first and then the body will be clean» was most likely of Jewish origin, corresponding to the spirit of the prophets, if not directly proceeding from them, was strongly held at Qumran, and was an important element in the teachings of Christ. Like the themes «pure in body and in soul» and «the water cleans the body while the Holy Spirit cleans the heart», this may be a stock formula that took on different meanings in different milieux and contexts while the words remained more or less the same. What Our Lord seems to have meant by this in Matthew, 23, 25-25, to sources. This is true in comparisons between the effects of Jewish judge from Matthew, 7, 15-20 and the many other texts on inward rather than outward goodness, is that as the inner dispositions are the source of all outward manifestations of conduct and appearance, by purifying them first the purification of actions and appearance naturally follows. The reverse would be falsehood and hypocrisy. This is also Justin's meaning in the passage quoted. The Pseudo-Clementines, however, take it to mean that after the inner tendencies are purified, they will naturally take care of the decent ordering of the outward aspect of man, the body, by cleansing it with ritual washings, while St. Cyprian follows this interpretation but thinks of the outer aspect as mere physical cleanliness and, using the Lukian text, urges almsgiving as the chief means of purifying the heart from sins.

As for the meaning of «bodily purity» in the Pseudo-Clementines, when compared with purity of heart and termed its consequence, it seems to be ritual purity, while «purity of heart» means sinlessness in the inner dispositions, freedom from evil thoughts considered as demonic influences, and a state enabling one to see God in the future life.

of the Ebionite sect. But the concept of purification through knowledge is also found in the Qumran writings (*Manual of Discipline*, 1 QS 1, 11 ff. Cited in BLACK, p. 36).

66. *Homilies*, 11, 28-29 (P. G. 2, 296-297). Tr. SMITH et al., p. 290.

67. *De opere et eleemosynis* 1 (P. L. 4, 601). Translation by M. F. TOAL, *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, II (Chicago, Regnery, 1958), p. 113.

68. 14, 1 (P. G. 6, 503). Tr. COXE, p. 201.

69. *Jewish Antiquities*, 18, cited by J. STRIMMANN, *St. John the Baptist and the Desert Tradition* (New York, Harper, 1938), p. 117.

70. A note refers the reader to J. THOMAS, *Le Mouvement baptiste en Palestine et en Syrie* (Gembloz, 1935).

*Bodily Purity as Purity of Actions and Purity of Heart as Purity of Thought*

It would not be true to say, however, that «bodily purity» usually means ritual purity in second and third century Christian

71. Cf. DELORME, p. 52. The theme reappears in PHIL. *De plantatione Noe*, 162; sec also F. HAUCK, *notae in Theologisches Wörterbuch zum N. T.*, III, p. 421.

and Christian «baptisms» and in the Pseudo-Clementines, but not in general. The bodily purity which is said to result from baptism and to be one of the elements of the Christian life is explained as the healing of the body's tendency to corruption, both in the moral and physical sense, and as a preparation for the resurrection. This doctrine, recently revived by F. X. Durwell,<sup>72</sup> can be found, for example, in Hermas,<sup>73</sup> Justin, Irenaeus,<sup>74</sup> and fairly generally among the first and second century writers, and is sometimes connected with the idea of bodily purity as purity of actions.

Like most early Christian concepts concerning the flesh, the idea of the body as the organ of activity or conduct (the more common scriptural equivalent is the hands) can probably be traced to St. Paul, as in I Cor., 6, 20, *σολαρε τῷ δέιν ἐν τῷ στολεῖ φάνη*, translated in the Arndt-Gingrich Lexicon of the New Testament as «glorify God through your body, i. e., by leading a holy life».<sup>75</sup> In II Corinthians, 5, 10, St. Paul says that at the judgment each will receive «what he has won through the body, according to his works, whether good or evil».

The early Fathers taught an optimistic view of the worth of the body in opposition to the Gnostics. Indeed, the vigorous struggles they and their successors of the fourth century waged against those who sought to depict the flesh as the principle of evil, and to deny the resurrection are often forgotten by modern writers who speak of their hatred of the body, to which they sometimes trace the origins of monasticism. Justin, for example —perhaps I should say pseudo-Justin— denies that the flesh is the principle of evil and stresses the unity of the human person, saying that in baptism body and soul «both were washed and both wrought righteousness».<sup>76</sup> The fact that we attempt to keep the body under control, pure, is an argument for the resurrection:

But if the flesh do not rise, why is it also guarded, and why do we not rather suffer it to indulge its desires? Why do we not imitate physicians, who, it is said, when they get a patient that is despaired of, and incurable, allow him to indulge his desires?<sup>77</sup>

72. *The Resurrection of Christ; a Biblical Study*, R. SHEED, tr. (New York, Shoed and Ward, 1960).

73. Sim., 5, 5-7 (ed. LKE, p. 166-170). Cf. I Cor., 6, 12-20.

74. Cf. infra.

75. οὐαὶ Ἀρντὶ καὶ Γίνγριθ, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 8 (P. G. 7, 1586). Translation by M. Dondis (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, D, p. 298).

## II Clement

This, according to certain second and third century writers, was precisely what was beginning to happen as a consequence of the idea of the body's worthlessness and of its incapability of sharing in immortality. For this reason, «the main object of the writer [of II Clement, which I am including here because of what I believe to be its anti-heretical character], concerned with these heresies as errors of conduct, not of doctrine] is to inculcate a high Christology, a pure life, and a belief in the resurrection of the flesh. So much is generally agreed...»<sup>78</sup> And Professor Quasten says,

«The sermon is very clear on the necessity of good works».<sup>79</sup> Indeed, to my mind, this is the basic aim of the entire sermon (for it is an epistle in name only). The author sees a close relationship between the belief in the resurrection of the flesh and «a pure life» or «good works», since he urges, «Let us... repent... of the wicked deeds which we have done in the flesh», and since he expresses the idea of keeping the commandments as purity of the flesh or of the body: «If we keep the flesh pure (την στολαν δινον) and if we observe the commandments of the Lord, we shall obtain eternal life».<sup>80</sup> The two clauses beginning with «if» are examples of the synonymous parallelism so often found in the Bible, as are the two beginning with the same word in another passage: «With what confidence shall we enter into the palace of God, if we keep not our baptism pure and undefiled? Or who shall be our advocate if we be not found to have pious and righteous works?»<sup>81</sup> Keeping baptism undefiled is said to be the equivalent of righteous works in this passage; elsewhere it seems to be synonymous with purity of the flesh: «Keep the flesh pure, and the seal of baptism undefiled, that we may obtain eternal life».<sup>82</sup>

The preacher acknowledges the insignificance of the flesh and its purity in itself: twice he says it is a small thing, but the means to a great thing, eternal life.<sup>83</sup> Then he warns, «And let none of

77. 10 (P. G. 7, 1590-1591). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 299.

78. K. LKE, introduction to *The Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, in *The Apostolic Father*, I. (Loeb Library, New York, Putnam, 1930), p. 126.

79. *Patrology*, I (Newman, Westminster, Maryland, 1951), p. 57.

80. *II Clement*, 8, 2 and 4 (ed. LKE, I, p. 140); cf. also 6, 9 (ed. LKE, p. 138).

81. 6, 9 (ed. LKE, p. 138).

82. 8, 6 (ed. LKE, p. 140).

83. 5,5 (ed. LKE, p. 134); 8, 5 (ed. LKE, p. 140).

you say that this flesh is not judged an does not rise again».<sup>84</sup> Apparently this is the idea he is trying to combat, because of the ruinous consequences in the moral order. Irenaeus ascribes a similar doctrine to Marcion: «And salvation, he says, will be of our souls only, those souls which have learned his doctrine, but the body, because in truth it is taken from the earth, cannot possibly partake of salvation».<sup>85</sup> The Gnostic Basilides teaches the same, and hence attaches no importance to any good action, including «every kind of lusts».<sup>86</sup> The Valentinian Gnostics hold that good works and mere faith are necessary for animal men (*βούτοι*), who do not have perfect gnosis, «but as to themselves, they hold that they shall be entirely and undoubtedly saved, not by means of conduct, but because they are spiritual by nature... For even as gold, when submerged in filth, loses not on that account its beauty... so they affirm that they cannot in any measure suffer hurt, or lose their spiritual substance, whatever the material actions in which they may be involved... And committing many other abominations and impieties, they run us down (who from the fear of God guard against sinning even in thought and word) as utterly contemptible and ignorant persons, while they highly exalt themselves, and claim to be perfect, and the elect seed».<sup>87</sup> And while some Gnostics make use of various sacraments of redemption or purification, others «hold that the *knowledge* of unspeakable Greatness is itself perfect redemption» from matter, error, and evil.<sup>88</sup> Thus in this case a pessimistic attitude toward the body led to license and an optimistic attitude to asceticism.

The same tendencies are evident in the Gospel of Thomas, particularly in Logion 14, an anti-works and anti-ascetical pronouncement on inner versus outer purity formed from a conflation of various canonical texts:

Jesus said to them: If you fast, you will beget a sin for yourselves; and if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do an evil to your spirits. And if you go into any land and travel in its regions, if they receive you eat what they set before you. Heal

the sick among them. For that which goes into your mouth will not defile you, but that which comes forth from your mouth, that is what will defile you.<sup>89</sup>

This is carrying the Gospel stress on inner rather than outer purity to the extreme. These works which the Logion declares to be worthless for purification are the very means which the pseudo-Clement recommends:

Almsgiving is therefore good even as penitence (*metanoya*) for sin; fasting is better than prayer, but the giving of alms is better than both; and love «covers a multitude of sins», but prayer from a good conscience rescues from death. Blessed is every man who is found full of these things; for almsgiving lightens sin.<sup>90</sup>

Whatever the significance of the same combination of ascetical works being found in the Gospel of Thomas and in II Clement, it is interesting that Logion 22,<sup>91</sup> which is related to the Gospel of the Egyptians,<sup>92</sup> is also referred to in chapter 12 of II Clement where «the outside [shall be] as the inside» is explained as follows: «He means this, that the inside is the soul, and the outside is the body. Therefore, just as your body is visible, so let your soul be apparent in your good works».<sup>93</sup> Thus he uses a Gnostic saying in an anti-Gnostic manner, to prove that purity of the flesh must complete inner purity.

II Clement also speaks of the purity of the flesh in a very difficult and somewhat incoherent chapter on the pre-existent spiritual Church, chapter 14, which might be paraphrased as follows: The Church, a feminine principle that could be thought of as the First Eve, corresponding to St. Paul's concept of Christ as the First Adam,<sup>94</sup> existed from the beginning as God's idea of uniting creatures to Himself through His Son. It became manifest for our salvation in the flesh of Christ, hypothetically wedded to his Spirit,

89. *The Gospel of Thomas*, W. SCHNEEMELCHER, ed., in *New Testament Apocrypha, I: Gospels and Related Writings* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1963), p. 512.

90. 16, 4, p. 154. For almsgiving as a means of obtaining forgiveness of sins see Is. 58, 79; Sir., 3, 33; Dan., 4, 24; Tob., 4, 11; 12, 8-9; Lk. 11, 4; St. CYPRIAN, *De opere et elemosynis*, 2 (P. L. 4, 603-604); *Constitutiones apostolorum*, 7, 12, 2 (ed. FUNK, I, p. 398).

91. SCHNEEMELCHER, p. 513.

92. Cf. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Stromata*, 3, 13 (P. G. 8, 1192-1193).

93. 12, 4 (ed. LAKE, I, p. 146).

94. Cf. DANÉLÓ, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, p. 311.

84. 9, 1 (ed. LAKE, p. 140).  
85. *Adversus haereses*, 21, 3 (P. G. 7, 639). Translation by J. QUASTEN, *Patrology*, I, p. 269.

86. 1, 24, 5 (P. G. 7, 678).  
87. 1, 6, 2 and 4 (P. G. 7, 505). Tr. COKE, p. 324.  
88. 1, 21, 4 (P. G. 7, 666). Tr. COKE, p. 346.

and is its extension on earth, the Body of Christ. Therefore if Christians guard this Church made flesh by guarding their own flesh, they will partake of her in the Spirit.<sup>95</sup>

In the two last cited passages, the one on the outside and the inside and the one on the pre-existent Church, the word that is used in contrast to «flesh» is «spirit», and the compliment to «body» is «soul». The homily also mentions purity of heart, but with nothing of the sense of the complimentary relationship with purity of the flesh that we find in Irenaeus and succeeding writers. When the preacher urges «repentance from a pure heart», οὐ πλευρῶν καρδίας, it is clear that he means purifying the inward attitudes of the heart, for he goes on to say that God «has knowledge of all things beforehand, and knows the things in our hearts».<sup>96</sup> In the two following chapters the exhortation, «let us then serve God with a pure heart» (εὐ καθηρ. καρδία), refers to avoiding Godlessness,<sup>97</sup> by believing «the promise of God» and not doubting that a judgment is forthcoming,<sup>98</sup> and by not «bringing in human fears and preferring the pleasures of the present to the promises of the future».<sup>99</sup> It calls for faith in an eschatological judgment as a basis for good works.

But though the author several times uses the term «a pure heart», this theme is overshadowed and partially absorbed by the idea of purity of the flesh, or outward actions. Since the threat to a meaningful and valid Christian life no longer arises from the direction of formalism or an over-spiritualization, the emphasis shifts from an unrealistic over-spiritualization, the emphasis shifts from making sure that the heart's intentions are in accord with the body's outward actions to seeing that the inner faith and enlightenment of the heart or soul are actually expressed in external acts. The end sought remains the same, however: the basic sincerity of the spiritual life lived in the sight of God, which is what the prophets mean when they used the word «heart».

### Irenaeus

The same need to stress the value of works and the body in the face of the Gnostic denial of their importance led Irenaeus to teach a twofold purification of body and soul. He links this double purity with baptism in water and the Holy Spirit, speaking of the Apostles as «purifying their souls and their bodies through the baptism of water and of the Holy Spirit».<sup>100</sup> Elsewhere he clearly attributes the purification of the body to the water and that of the soul to the Spirit: «For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of the washing which leads to incorruption, while our souls received it from the Spirit; so that both bodies and souls are necessary for progress in the life of God».<sup>101</sup> The restoration of the spirit (which Irenaeus considers an integral part of the human composite made up of body, soul and spirit), lost at Adam's Fall,<sup>102</sup> makes men «pure» and «spiritual» in a Christian, not a Gnostic sense,<sup>103</sup> as the impulse of the Spirit overcomes the weakness of the flesh and gradually spiritualizes the whole man in preparation for the resurrection. This is done, not by eliminating the flesh, «but by the impartation of the Spirit».<sup>104</sup> «Now spiritual men shall not be incorporeal spirits; but our substance, that is, the union of flesh and spirit, receiving the Spirit of God, makes up the spiritual man».<sup>105</sup> By becoming spiritual through the restoration of the Spirit «we have washed away, not the substance of our body, nor the image of our [primary] formation, but our former vain conversations».<sup>106</sup>

But salvation, resurrection, can only be achieved by preserving the Spirit through faith and good works, in purity of soul and of body: «Inasmuch, therefore, as without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God».<sup>107</sup> On the other

95. According to Daniélou, «The context of its [i. e. II Clement's] speculative doctrine of the pre-existent Church is Jewish-Christian apocalyptic, and there is, therefore, no point in looking for Gnostic sources» (*Theology of Jewish Christianity*, p. 311).

96. 9 (ed. LAKE, p. 142); see also 3, 4-5 (ed. LAKE, p. 132).

97. See *Studia monastica*, VII, 1966, pp. 13-14, n. 28.

98. 11, 1 (ed. LAKE, p. 144).

99. 10, 3 (ed. LAKE, pp. 142-144).

100. *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, 41 (Tr. SMITH, p. 41).

101. *Adversus haereses*, 3, 17, 2 (P. G. 7, 930).

102. Cf. Daniélou, *Message évangélique*, p. 365 ff.

103. *Adversus haereses*, 5, 9, 2 (P. G. 7, 1145).

104. 5, 8, 1 (P. G. 7, 1140).

105. 5, 8, 2 (P. G. 7, 1150). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 534.

106. 5, 11, 2 (P. G. 7, 1151). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 537.

107. 5, 9, 3 (P. G. 7, 1145). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 535.

108. *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, 41. Tr. SMITH, p. 74.

hand, the Holy Spirit only remains in a body and soul that are pure: «And they [the apostles] gave counsel, with the word of truth, to keep the body unstained unto resurrection, and the soul incorruptible. For so (they said) do the faithful keep when there abides constantly in them the Holy Spirit, who is given by Him in baptism, and is kept by him who has received Him by the practice of truth and holiness and justice and patience».<sup>109</sup> This is nothing but the common doctrine of the early Fathers: the Holy Spirit abides in a pure heart, but cannot stand being soiled and departs at the entrance of sin.<sup>110</sup>

The perfect are those in whom the Holy Spirit has remained and increased and who have kept body, soul, and spirit stainless: «Those, then, are the perfect who have had the Spirit of God remaining in them, and have preserved their souls and bodies blameless, holding fast the *faith* of God, that is, that faith which is [directed] towards God, and maintaining *righteous dealings* with respect to their neighbors.<sup>111</sup>

We see that Irenaeus defines purity of heart or of soul as *faith*, and bodily purity, like Clement, as good works. This can be seen even more clearly in a passage from the *Proof of the Apostolic Teaching*.

And since man is an animal made up of soul and body..., there is both *bodily holiness*, the safeguard of abstinence from all shameful things and all wicked *deeds*, and *holiness of soul*, the preservation in its integrity of *faith* in God, adding nothing and subtracting nothing from it... and «*sinners*» are they who have *knowledge* of God and do not *keep his commandments*... *Action*, then, is perfected by *faith*.<sup>112</sup>

What we have here is a complimentary polarity:

*bodily holiness* or purity = *good works* = *keeping the commandment* = *action*; *holiness of soul* = *faith* = *knowledge*.

Thus for Irenaeus purity of soul consists in the possession of true faith or knowledge, as the Gnostics say—though they leave faith to the ordinary psychic man; but there is also bodily purity or works, which they neglect.

In the *Adversus haereses* he adds another note, *meditation*, to the concept of purity of soul or of heart when he asks, «Who then are the clean? Those who make their way by *faith* steadily towards the Father and the Son; ...and they *meditate* day and night upon the words of God, that they may be adorned with good works». Faith must be perfected through meditation: «For men of this stamp [heretics, but apparently also orthodox Christians who do not meditate] do indeed say that they believe in the Father and the Son, but they never meditate as they should on the things of God, neither are they adorned with the works of righteousness; ...and the law has pronounced them unclean».<sup>113</sup> Irenaeus does not make a distinction between faith and meditation but says that true faith must include meditation.

All this constitutes an authentically Christian presentation of the relations between the active and contemplative aspects of the Christian life, though elaborated in answer to Gnosticism. Clement of Alexandria and Origen were to restate these teachings in the form of the interaction between *τρόπος* and *θρόπος*, which became one of the main sources for the contrast between action and contemplation which has played such a large part in Christian spirituality.

#### Tertullian

Tertullian also attempts to refute the idea that sins of the flesh do not count if the mind maintains the right attitude, and R. De Labriolle thinks that the doctrine he is combatting originated with a group of Gnostics who attempted to introduce it into Christianity.<sup>114</sup> He finds purity of soul<sup>115</sup> and of body enjoined in that order in the commandments of the Old Law. After purity of the spirit, kept by refraining from idolatry, observing the Sabbath, and reverencing parents, «it laid down no other precept to strengthen and support the aforementioned decrees than 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'. For after chastity and sanctity of the spirit (*spiritualem castitatem sanctitatemque*) there followed purity

109. See *Studia monastica*, VIII, 1966, pp. 28, 30 and 32.

110. *Adversus haereses*, 5, 6, 1 (P. G. 1138). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 532. 2-3. Tr. SMITH, pp. 48-49.

112. 5, 8, 3 (P. G. 7, 1143). Tr. ROBERTS and RAMBAULT, p. 534.

113. Introduction to *Tertullien. De Paucitate. De Pudicitia*, I (Paris, 1906). p. 39 ff.

114. Or of heart, as the soul has its directive faculty located in the heart and therefore the two words are synonymous, *De anima*, 15, 4 (*Corpus christianorum*, 2, p. 801).

of the flesh (*corporis integritas*).<sup>113</sup> But adultery is not the only form of bodily impurity, though Tertullian certainly dwells on it at great length. He classifies sins as spiritual or bodily, and, unlike the other writers we have considered, explains the reasons for this classification:

'The reason why sins are called 'spiritual' or 'corporeal' is that every sin is either a thought or a deed. Thus a corporeal sin is one of deed, because a deed, like a body, can be seen and touched; a spiritual sin, however, is one of the soul, because, like a spirit, it can neither be seen nor held fast.'<sup>114</sup>

Elsewhere he classifies sins, in the familiar biblical terms, as thoughts, desires, words, or deeds.<sup>115</sup> Much has been written on Tertullian's notion of sin.<sup>116</sup> Here we shall only note that he attributes the beginnings of both sins of thought and sins of action to the soul: «Sins of thought that do not result in action are attributed to the soul»,<sup>117</sup> and «Even in actions which need the assistance of the body, it is the soul which first conceives, plans, orders, carries out the acts in question».<sup>118</sup> Though both flesh<sup>119</sup> and soul<sup>120</sup> are said to be purified in baptism, baptism has its beginning in faith, so that just as John first purified hearts by penance in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit from Christian baptism, the catechumens must also purify their hearts by penance *before* baptism to prepare for the sacrament: «That cleansing water is a seal of faith and this faith has its beginning and finds its reward in a genuine repentance. We are not baptized so that we may cease committing sin but because we have already ceased, since we are already *clean of heart*».<sup>121</sup> Likewise the *Apostolic Constitutions* say that catechumens

mens should first purify their hearts from all perversity of mind and from every spot and wrinkle before being baptized.<sup>122</sup> Origen<sup>123</sup> says that forgiveness of sins in baptism is dependent on a previous conversion. This is to exaggerate «the efficacy of personal repenance to the detriment of the efficacy of Baptism».<sup>124</sup>

*The Literature on Christian Virginity: Purity of Heart as the Inner Virtues and Purity of the Flesh as Control of the Body and its Senses*

In another body of literature, the writings on virginity, a subject to which many of the Fathers devoted entire treatises, we again find frequent references to a twofold purity of body and soul, spirit, or heart. St. Polycarp had already called attention to the obligations of consecrated virgins and widows to maintain great purity of heart.<sup>125</sup> An early widow's prayer asks for perfection of the heart: «Heal the wounds in my heart, Lord God; strengthen my heart until it comes to perfection, through the Holy Spirit... May we think the thoughts we ought to think, guided by faith made strong in the Spirit».<sup>126</sup> That teaching is reinforced by the so-called *First Epistle of Clement on Virginity* and by the treatise on virginity attributed to St. Athanasius.<sup>127</sup> The Fathers want to make sure that Christian virgins to whom they address their counsels do not remain pharisaically content with the material observance of mere physical virginity; such an attitude would fall far short of the New Testament teaching of the all-importance of the inner intention, the thoughts, the heart. That is why they so often quote to them St. Paul's statement that the virgin must «be holy both

113. *De pudicitia*, 5, 2 (*Corpus christianorum*, 2, p. 1287). Translation by W. P. LE SAINT (*Ancient Christian Writers*, 28), p. 62.

114. *De penitentia*, 3 (*Corpus christianorum*, 1, p. 325). Tr. W. P. LE SAINT (*Ancient Christian Writers*, 28), pp. 18-19.

115. *Apologeticum*, 36, 4 (*Corpus christianorum*, 1, p. 149).  
116. C. H. MORRY, *The Concept of Mental Sin in Early Christianity* (Washington, 1920), pp. 50-55; A. B. WILHELM-HOGBERG, *Pecatum, Sin and Guilt in Ancient Rome* (Groningen, 1954), pp. 98-102; G. THICHTWEER, *Die Sündenlehre des Origines* (Regensburg, Pustet, 1958), pp. 19-30.

117. *De anima*, 40, 4 (*Corpus christianorum*, 2, pp. 843-844).

118. *De anima*, 58, 7 (*Corpus christianorum*, 2, p. 859).

119. *De pudicitia*, 6, 16 (*Corpus christianorum*, 2, p. 1291).

120. *De anima*, 40, 1 (*Corpus christianorum*, 2, p. 853).

121. *De penitentia*, 6, 17 (*Corpus christianorum*, 1, p. 331).

122. *De pudicitia*, 7, 40, 1 (ed. Funk, p. 442). In Book 8, 6, 12 there is a prayer for the renewal of the hearts of the catechumens: «Give them a new heart and renew an upright spirit within the' (Ps. 50 [51], 12) so that they may know you and do your will with a full heart and a willing soul» (2 Macc., 1, 3).

123. *In Læt. hom.*, 21 (G. C. S., 9, pp. 28-31).

124. W. P. LE SAINT, *Tertullian, On Penance and on Purity (Ancient Christian Writers*, 28), p. 161, n. 103.

125. *Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, 5, 3 (ed. LAKE, I, p. 290); 4, 3 (ed. LAKE, I, p. 288).

126. *Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, I, 43 (ed. J. E. RATHMANN, Mainz, 1899), p. 100. TR. HAMMAN and MARCHET, p. 149. Father Hamman says of this prayer that it is «a fragment preserved in the apocryphal *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* which *may be much older than the work*» (p. 132).

127. *The First Epistle of Clement and Virgines*, 7, 2 (ed. F. DIERKAMP, *Patres Apostolici*, 2, Tübingen, 1913), p. 12.

in body and in spirit.<sup>130</sup> Bodily purity is, of course, chastity in this context, but the notion also includes the control of the bodily senses.<sup>131</sup> By this life of chastity the virgin offers up her whole body as a sacrifice to God.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, this sacrifice should include the whole self: «The perfect man must offer up all, both of his body and of his soul, that he may be complete and not deficient». It must especially include the heart, as the seat of the thoughts: «If I sanctify my heart as well and consecrate all its thoughts to the Lord, what more is left? I have no evil in my thoughts, I meditate on no worldly thing, conceit and anger have no place with me. Day and night I meditate on the law of the Lord. This is what it means 'to consecrate and sanctify oneself' and 'to make a great vow」.<sup>133</sup> St. Polycarp had the same concept when he told the widows of the community that they should consider themselves holy altars, offering up pure sacrifices to God.<sup>134</sup> The idea of the pure heart as an altar of God is found in the sayings of Sextus, 46. The chief value of purity of the flesh itself is as a means to purity of the soul and conscience and all virtue. Methodius writes in the *Symposium*: «For chastity alone causes the soul to be guided in the noblest and best way and to be washed clean of the stains and impurities of the world».<sup>135</sup>

The *Symposium* is typical of the literature on the subject in its insistence that true virginity must include the purification of the heart, in the sense of the elimination not only of the more spiritual vices, such as pride, vainglory, lack of charity, anger, ambition, etc., but of «evil deeds» in general. Significantly Arete cites Christ's pronouncement on exterior and interior purity to make this point, and here «deeds» are connected not to the flesh, but to the heart: «The virgin who becomes proud of his ability to control the impulses of the flesh does not honor chastity».

130. 1 Cor, 7, 34; see also 2 Cor., 7, 1; 1 Thess., 4, p. 48.

131. METHODIUS, *Symposium*, 11 (P. G. 18, 206).

132. Cf. ROM, 12, 1; AMBROSE, *De instituione virginis*, 1, 3, 13 (P. L. 16, 192).

133. METHODIUS, *Symposium*, 5, 2 (P. G. 18, 98). Translation by H. MUSURILLO (*Ancient Christian Writers*, 24, p. 78).

134. METHODIUS, *Symposium*, 5, 4 (P. G. 18, 98). Tr. MUSURILLO, p. 81.

135. Epistle, 4, 3 (ed. LKE, I, p. 288). Likewise the *Didascalia* several times calls widows the altar of God (3, 10, 7, ed. FUNK, p. 204; 4, 5, 1, ed. FUNK, p. 222; 4, 7, and 8, ed. FUNK, pp. 226-228).

136. *Symposium*, 10, 1 (P. G. 18, 192). Tr. MUSURILLO, p. 141.

Rather does he dishonour it by his arrogance and pride, purifying «the outside of the dish» (Mt. 23, 25) and the platter, that is, the flesh, the body, while doing harm to his heart by his domineering conceit... No, it is not proper to practice chastity and virginity and then become defiled and incontinent by evil deeds.<sup>137</sup>

To cite a testimony from the fourth century, St. Gregory of Nyssa finds all forms of impurity basically alike at bottom.<sup>138</sup> That is why not only sins against chastity, but all vices corrupt virginity: «If we wish to call these enemies by their true name, anger is an adulterer, avarice is an adulterer, envy, vengeance, enmity, jealousy, hatred are adulterers; all the things, in short, which the Apostle enumerates as contrary to sound doctrine constitute a catalogue of adulterers».<sup>139</sup>

Elsewhere Methodius uses another comparison, this time taken from pagan worship and perhaps Platonic in origin, but with New Testament affinities<sup>140</sup> to bring out the same superiority of inner virtue —including actions, but especially the thoughts that are its base— over fleshly chastity. Bodily purity alone is insufficient, just as it would be a mistake in values to devote more care and consideration to the exterior of a temple building than to the statues within. The greater effort, therefore, should be expended on the adornment of the soul with righteousness. This implies above all else listening to the word of God and meditating on the Scriptures, which is compared to the salt which preserves the flesh. Virginity is declared to be impossible without this preservative, by which thoughts of divine things overcome the sensual thoughts of concupiscence; according to the key Pauline text, the second half of which I have already quoted several times: «And the unmarried woman, and the virgin, thinks about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit».<sup>141</sup> Methodius insists on this meditation and recollection as an essential element for the practice of virginity, somewhat in the same sense that Irenaeus equates purity of heart or soul with faith, knowledge, and meditation on the word of God.

137. *Symposium*, 11 (P. G. 18, 205). Tr. MUSURILLO, pp. 149-150.

138. *On Virginity*, 14 (P. G. 46, pp. 381-384).

139. *On Virginity*, 15 (P. G. 46, p. 385).

140. *Symposium*, 1, 1 (P. G. 18, 37). Cf. Mt. 23, pp. 16-22.

141. 1 Cor., 7, p. 34. *Ibid.*

In the epilogue, in which Gregorion and Eubulion discuss the relative merit of those who do not feel the stimuli of passion and of those who feel them but do not yield to them, Gregorion maintains the superiority of the former. She defines purity of heart as the absence of evil thoughts:

For these are the ones whom the Lord calls divine in them without question—those, declaring plainly that those who believe in them without question shall see God; for they introduce nothing into their souls which might darken or disturb the divine eye of the soul in its divine contemplation. And they not only keep, as I said, their flesh pure of carnal knowledge, dwelling as they do beyond the reach of worldly desires, but in addition they make their hearts inaccessible to all impure thoughts (Irenaeus) and it is especially here that the Holy Spirit takes up His abode as in a sanctuary... The Holy Spirit ever dwells within it, and it is never disturbed or dragged down by impure imaginings or thoughts (Origen)...<sup>142</sup>

Gregorion is here expressing one aspect of the genuine biblical notion of purity of heart: the absence of evil thoughts. She is also very traditional in connecting this notion with the presence of the Holy Spirit and with the vision of God. Nevertheless, she loses the debate to Eubulion's argument that he who overcomes a greater resistance is greater. Methodius does not set much store by *apatheia*, though his earlier writings show some sign of the influence of Origen, whom he later opposed.

From all this it will be seen that Methodius does not have a clear and well-defined idea of the distinction between purity of the flesh and purity of heart, as does Irenaeus. Nevertheless, it is possible to compare the ways in which both writers use the terms and to find them more closely agreed as to the meaning of purity of heart than in their concept of bodily purity. Both see «meditation on the law of the Lord» as one element of purity of heart, but while Irenaeus thinks of this preoccupation of the mind in terms of religious knowledge as a development of faith, Methodius stresses it as a means of eliminating evil thoughts. He also differs from Irenaeus in including the higher virtues, both in their inner aspect as habitual attitudes and, to a lesser extent, as the actions which flow from these attitudes, in the category of purity of heart. As for their respective notions of purity of the flesh, Methodius has a

narrower interpretation, since for him this means only chastity and control of the bodily senses, while Irenaeus sees it as good works and actions in general, including chastity.

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For the second and third century writers that have been considered, then, bodily purity can mean several things: it can be ritual purity, in a context comparing Jewish and Christian religious baths or among Judaeo-Christians who still retain the ritual lustration; good works or actions in general, for II Clement, Irenaeus, and Tertullian; or chastity, for the writers on virginity. By orthodox Christians it is also considered the result of faith in Christ and baptism and is thought of as both the effect of and a necessary condition for the presence of the Holy Spirit which spiritualizes the body, as well as the whole man, enables it to perform spiritual works, overcomes its tendency to death and corruption, and thus prepares it for the resurrection.

Conversely, purity of heart is seen as something essentially interior, even when, as in the case of Methodius, it includes good works, involving the intentions, the thoughts, right faith, meditation of God and the things of God, and thus knowledge of God; the inner sources from which the outer actions flow. The Pseudo-Clementines and Valentinius follow the tradition of Pseudo-Barnabas and connect evil thoughts with demons. All agree, even those who stress purity of the body—II Clement, Irenaeus, the Pseudo-Clementines—that purity of heart is far more important and should be given priority. And some are beginning to write of the mystical fulfillment for which the purification of the heart in its ascetical aspect prepares: the vision of God, whether in the next world or already here below.

(To be continued.)

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